FROM THE DIARY OF C. E. RIGGS

DECEMBER 1, 1943: Took delivery of new B-24H, No. 4129264. Total flight time on plane upon arrival at Langley Field, Va., 10:10.

DECEMBER 3, 1943: First test flight of new plane to test - fire guns and calibrate compass.

DECEMBER 7, 1943: Flew first X-C to Patterson AFB, Ohio. Returned to Langley about midnight. Had 14 on board.

DECEMBER 8, 1943: Left Langley for staging area at Mitchell Field, Long Island; arrived Mitchell 1430.

DECEMBER 14, 1943: Left Mitchell in snowstorm (8° F) at1230. Arrived Morrison Field, West Palm Beach, Fla., 1945 hours (70°+) Instrument flying to coast of Virginia; snow and rain to Florida coast. 1200 miles.

DECEMBER 16, 1943: Left States at 0230. Plane following us on take-off crashed and burned. Opened sealed orders 1 hour after T.O. We're headed for Tunisia to join the new 15th A.F. Arrived Waller Field, Trinidad at 1230. Landed with flat tire. Distance 1800+ nautical miles.

DECEMBER 17, 1943: Left Waller at 1000Z; arrived Belem, Brazil, at 1705Z; 1280 nautical miles.

DECEMBER 18, 1943: T.O. from Belem at 1005Z; arrived Natal, Brazil, 1555Z. 987 nautical miles. Rough air below 4000'.

DECEMBER 19, 1943 to DECEMBER 31, 1943: Held up because of weather and malaria at Dakar. Test flew plane twice. Replaced right main wheel damaged on landing at Waller.

JANUARY 1, 1944: Different kind of New Year's Eve celebration. T.O. from Natal at 0415Z for flight to Dakar, Senegal, W. Africa. Arrived at Eknes Field, Senegal, at 1500Z. Crossed ocean without seeing water; dark, or on top of or in clouds for entire flight. 1800 nautical miles

JANUARY 3, 1944: Left Eknes 0730Z; arrived Marrakech, French Morroco, 1500 Z. Auto pilot finally performed great. 1400 nautical miles.

JANUARY 5, 1944: Left Marrakech at 0915 Z in formation flight of about 20 aircraft. Arrived Djedeida, Tunisia, in hard rain and hail storm. No tents available yet. Slept in plane. Cold!

JANUARY 10, 1944: Finally got tents; moved in today. Spent several nights in Tunis. Flew 2:30 formation.

JANUARY 13: Still raining. Received first mail.

JANUARY 14: Lou Calabretta cracked up on T.O. Lucky to get out but plane destroyed.

JANUARY 19, 1944: Russ Odell killed in crash on T.O.

JANUARY 25, 1944: Went to hospital in Tunis to visit Metrick, Falkingham, and Bobb.

JANUARY 27, 1944: Col. Cool goes to Italy to check our new base. 454th Group left yesterday. Should move soon.

JANUARY 30, 1944: Went to El Aouina AFB in Tunis for nose wheel actuating cylinder. Rec'd 13 letters.

FEBRUARY 1, 1944: 'Wakened at 0500. T.O. from Djedeida at 0815; arrived at Blackjack Field, Cerignola, Italy, 1245. Ground personnel sure glad to see us. They had gone overseas on troop ship.

FEBRUARY 3, 1944Ferried plane to 98th B.G. at Galatina - stayed overnight.

FEBRUARY 7, 1944: First mission cancelled because of weather. Censored mail.

FEBRUARY 8 - 12, 1944: Rain every day. Censored mail. Went to Foggia. Mac & Strohmeier make T-Sgt.; Johnston & Rushmore make S-Sgt.

FEBRUARY 14, 1944: Mission cancelled - weather. Moved to olive orchard and put up new tent.

FEBRUARY 21, 1944: Rain and snow all week.

* FEBRUARY 22, 1944: Finally made it. We bombed docks, harbor area at Zara, Yugo. Carried 10 - 500 #G.P. bombs. Light flak. No fighters. 5:40.

FEBRUARY 25, 1944: Aircraft factory at Graz, Austria, Moderate flak; some fighters. Bob Cleland's crew missing. 454th loses five planes. 10 - 500 #G.P. 6:00

FEBRUARY 26, 1944 to March 1, 1944: Rain

* MARCH 2, 1944: 15th bombed at Anzio - Cisterna Beachhead. 120-20# fragmentation bombs. Flak pretty heavy. Got first holes in my plane.

MARCH 4, 1944: Mission cancelled - weather - after 2-hr. flight. Made 1st Lt. effective March 1.

* MARCH 7, 1944: Dropped 10 - 500's on airfield at Fabrica de Roma. Not much flak this time. Some fighters.

MARCH 12, 1944: Went to Wing Hdqtrs for Link trainer practice.

* MARCH 15, 1944: Flew 2 missions to Cassino w/ 1000# bombs. Heavy bombers used for direct support of ground troops. Partly morale mission since they never see us. (Ha Ha very funny Dave.)

(5) * MARCH 17, 1944: First raid of war on Vienna. 40 - 100# fire bombs. Flak intense. Fighters. 6:45.

* MARCH 18, 1944: Magiano Airdrome in Po Valley. 120 - 20# frags. 5:20. Flak and fighters.

(3) * MARCH 19, 1944: Graz, Austria. A/C factory. 40 - 100# incendiaries. About 70 fighters; heavy flak. Rough! 454th loses 11 planes. We lose Lundwall & Pitcock.

MARCH 22, 1944: Bologna, Italy. Freight yards. 10 - 500's. 4:30.

* MARCH 24, 1944: Steyr, Austria Mission cancelled over Alps. Rimini, Italy, dock area alternate target. 40 - 100# incendiaries. 5:45. German radio confirms excellent bombing on Vienna last week.

MARCH 28, 1944: Verona, Italy, A/D. Good bombing. About 50 enemy aircraft.

* MARCH 29, 1944: Excellent bombing on Milan freight yards. 10 - 500's. 5:50. Moderate flak.

MARCH 30, 1944: Sofia, Bulgaria, F/Y. Not very good. Maj. Lanford led the Group. 10 - 500's.

(2) * APRIL 2, 1944: Palm Sunday. Steyr, Austria, ball-bearing works. #1 priority target in Europe. Continuous fighter attack for 2:25 in and out of target area. 455th w/ Col. Cool leads the 15th A.F. today. Flak worst yet. Kolbe and Johnston each shoot down 109's. We lose Powers, Pardoe, Brunson, Cheeseman. All of us pretty badly shot up. 6:50.

APRIL 3, 1944: 1st raid to Budapest. 10 - 500's. Ackerman killed by flak. 6:10.

(2) * APRIL 4, 1944: Excellent bombing on Bucharest. 1st raid there. Intense flak but not as accurate as Vienna and Steyr. 7:05.

APRIL 6, 1944: "Big John" Curtis killed on test flight.

APRIL 7, 1944: Bologna F/Y, 10 - 500's. Fairly easy mission. 4:20.

APRIL 8, 1944: Windsand and Rushmore awarded Purple Heart for Steyr.

(2) * APRIL 13, 1944: Tokol A/D at Budapest. 40 - 100# G.P.'s. Heavy flak. Some fighters. 5:55.

(2) * APRIL 15, 1944: Bucharest F/Y; 10 - 500's. Moderate flak. P-38's took care of fighters. 6:45.

* APRIL 16, 1944: Turnul Severin, Rumania. F/Y and A/D. 10 - 500's; milk run. 5:45.

APRIL 18, 1944: Ploesti Refineries. Flak intense. Target concealed w/ smoke pots. 10 - 500's. 6:50.

* APRIL 20, 1944: Flew Col. Cool's wing to Monfalcone, Italy, shipyards. 10 - 500's. Jumped by about 30 single-engine fighters. Lose Sampson and Shorty Adams. 5:00.

APRIL 21, 1944: Bucharest again. Really worked over by fighters. Lose Wallick, Norgard, and Jones near target; Slater and Callan on leaving target area. Willie Moore's crew bails out in Mountains north of Foggia. 7:00.

APRIL 23, 1944: Bod Voslau A/D, Vienna. 10 - 500's. Moderate flak; some fighters. 6:00.

(2) * APRIL 24, 1944: Ploesti-Bucharest Area. 10 - 500's. Flak intense; no fighters this time. 7:20.

MAY 1, 1944: Verona, Italy A/D. 4:30. 6 - 1000#.

(2) * MAY 5, 1944: Ploesti Oil Work; Col. Thos. S. Power flew right seat. He hardly touched controls on entire mission. 10 - 500's. Fighters get McWilliams. 7:00. Tired!

* MAY 6, 1944: Campina, Rumania. Beautiful job w/ 10 - 500's. Bob Beck shot down by fighters. Nine chutes counted. Bob's didn't open. 7:00.

(2) * MAY 10, 1944: A/C factory at Wiener Neustadt, Austria. Worst flak we've seen yet. 10 - 500's. 6:45. 456th B.G. lose six planes.

* MAY 12, 1944: Start of the big push for Rome. 10 - 500's on Leghorn docks. #3 engine shot out by flak. 4:30.

* MAY 14, 1944: Piacenza A/D w/ 240 - 20# frags. Milk run. 6:20.

* MAY 19, 1944: Genoa docks. 10 - 500's. Moderate flak. 5:40.

* MAY 26, 1944: Grenoble, France F/Y. 10 - 500's. Lost #2 engine. 7:30.

MAY 29, 1944 to JUNE 6, 1944: R & R at Isle of Capri.

(2) * JUNE 9, 1944: Munich M/Y Rough! Almost as bad as Steyr. #1 engine out; lots of holes from flak. 6-1000's. 6:50.

* JUNE 10, 1944: Ferrara, Italy A/D. 240-20# frags. 4:45. I hate those frags.

(2) * JUNE 16, 1944: Refinery at Vienna. Worked over good by E/A. Ju 88 came up right beside us still firing. Intense flak. Wurtz and other McWilliams get direct hit over target. No chutes. 18-250's. 6:30.

* JUNE 22, 1944: Chivasso, Italy motorworks. Most accurate bombing yet. Light flak. 18-250's. 6:40.

JUNE 23, 1944: Started for Bucharest. Flew around in clouds over Yugo. 3:55. (no mission credit)

* JUNE 24, 1944: Should have had day off but I flew Pat Murphy's crew to Craiova, Rumania. 10-500's. 7:00.

JUNE 26, 1944: Group shot to hell at Moosbierbaum near Vienna by E/A. Lose Sensenbrenner, Jackson, both Montgomerys, Brown, Archibald, Keogh, Lebsock, and two crews on first mission.

* JUNE 28, 1944: Karlova, Bulgaria A/D. About 50 E/A. 40-100's. 6:20

* JUNE 30, 1944: Scheduled for synthetic oil refinery on Polish border. Bad weather over Hungary. Several 24's blown up by fighters. Hit alternate w/ 40-100# incendiaries. 5:25.

(2) * JULY 1, 1944: Shell Oil Refinery at Budapest. Flak intense. Heavy E/A attack. George Tanner killed by flak. Lackner cracks up on take-off. 12-300;s. 6:50.

(2) * JULY 3, 1944: Locomotive works at Bucharest. 10-500's. Good coverage. Flak not as accurate for a welcome change. 7:10.

* JULY 6, 1944: Trieste Oil Refinery and storage tanks. Milk run. 10-500's. 4:50.

(2) * JULY 7, 1944: Longest haul yet into Germany. Synthetic oil refinery in the Odertal-Bleckhammer area. Flak heavy and intensely accurate. Lots of holes in the old "Wolf" today. 10-500's with good coverage. 8:00. Flak got Chadwick.

(2) * JULY 8, 1944: Munchendorf A/D at Vienna. 240-20# frags. They would give us those damn frags for our last mission. Intense flak and lots of E/A. Mission #FIFTY! 6:35.

JULY 15, 1944: 15th makes maximum effort on Ploesti. Roy Johnson hit by flak over target. Heard they were last seen bailing out over Yugo. with two feathered. Hope they made it.

JULY 17, 1944: Flak got Primage over Avignon, France.

JULY 18, 1944: Bercik and I hitch-hiked flight to Rome.

JULY 19, 1944: Toured Vatican City. Even got to meet with Pope Pius XII.

JULY 21, 1944: Major Lanford, 741st C.O. failed to return from mission.

JULY 22, 1944: Planes crashing all over the place---one south of field (3 killed); one just outside Cerignola (all bail out); and one in bomb dump south of field with all killed. Bombs exploding for two hours. Eddie Russell and someone collide over Bor, Yugo., returning from Ploesti. Eddie was on 47th mission.

JULY 24, 1944: We leave for Naples and home.

* Missions we flew.

(2) Double sortie.